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CCI Newsletter

June 2022



CCI
Christian Council
International

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Preface

Dear reader,

The past quarter has been an eventful one, especially when it comes to the decision of the United States Supreme Court regarding the "right to abortion". The US Constitution does not recognize this as a right. Laws about abortion must be made at the state level. No amount of outrage or opposition will change that fundamental fact, writes our US board member John Van Der Brink. People in the Netherlands are afraid that this decision will "blow over" which is evident from the attack made in [the newspaper \(NRC\)](#) against CCI.

Meskerem Ritmeester, our Policy & Advocacy Director Africa, and undersigner (Henk Jan van Schothorst) has been very active in making policy makers in the EU and ACP countries aware of the progressive ideology that is attempting to enshrine in trade treaties. We are working with the Driestar University of Applied Sciences to introduce the [Wonderfully Made](#) curriculum to African countries as an alternative to progressive comprehensive sexuality education. CCI also addressed the troubling provisions in the development of a WHO pandemic treaty.

At the United Nations in New York, the committee on Population and Development was followed. People there are trying to arrive at a joint document that is often unfavorable to pro-lifers, but Peter Smith discovered a good paragraph on national sovereignty.

CCI business network meetings were held both in the Netherlands, at Urk, and in the US, in New Jersey and Michigan. Pete Hoekstra, former US Ambassador to the Netherlands was the keynote speaker on two occasions. Riekelt Pasterkamp was present at all meetings as moderator. Thanks to Boudewijn Haase, President of Falk Panel, who was our host in Michigan.

We would like to introduce to you our representative in the USA, Mark den Hollander. A talented young man, who has been of great help in organizing the meetings in the USA. Thanks so much, Mark!

Furthermore, we continue to follow Päivi Räsänen who, although acquitted, has unfortunately been appealed against. We wish her much wisdom and strength and above all God's blessing.

As part of its support for the endangered Christian country of Armenia, CCI organized a business trip in cooperation with the Armenian government.

We have invested a lot lately and have received a lot of (financial) support. We appreciate this! It is important for us to know that we are not alone. Given the many issues that require our attention, staff expansion is still very much needed. We therefore hope for your (continued) support.

We wish you God's blessing from the bottom of our hearts.

With warm regards,

Henk Jan van Schothorst

Directeur Christian Council International

Fields of Work

A Nation Divided, on Abortion

By: John Van Der Brink

In the coming months, activists on both sides of the debate will do their utmost to try to convince lawmakers and the American public to restrict, or to legalize abortion. Time will tell the outcome of such action.



Meanwhile leaders of many foreign nations are weighing in on the Supreme Court decision. Predictably, most are claiming that the decision takes away women's rights, that it is unfair to minorities and the poor, and that 50 years of "progress" is being reversed. They are astonished that our supreme court had the courage to follow the constitutional law rather than to cave to pressure from the left to invent constitutional law. They are apparently surprised that the law did not have and still does not have the authority to justify the killing of the innocent life of a baby in a mother's womb. Perhaps they know that abortion laws are to be decided by the states, by elected officials, and that the American people in general are not as ready to destroy human life as they apparently seem to be. But fortunately, the opinions of foreign leaders do not overrule the majority of judges on our Supreme Court. Simply stated the United States Constitution does not identify a right to an abortion, and no amount of outrage or opposition will change that fundamental fact. Laws about abortion are to be legislated at the state level. That is where it should be, and that is where this Supreme Court decision has returned it.

Already there are forces at work to try to nullify or reverse the supreme court decision. Many Democrats and the media are speaking about a "public health crises" which would provide funding and resources to help women skirt the

law. Others have spoken about "packing the court" so more liberal justices would be appointed to effectively re-shift the mindset in favor of *Roe v Wade*. Thousands and millions have come out and publicly stated that they will not stand for this ruling and are even calling for the impeachment of the supreme court justices. Anything and everything is being done to try to restore a national right to an abortion. But the Supreme Court has rightly ruled that the Constitution does not guarantee the right to an abortion, and for now at least, that ruling will stand.

But there is another very important consideration here that we do not hear very much about today. But it should be heard. That is the silent behind-the-scenes efforts that has been at work already for many decades to try to normalize abortion on an international level. State representatives and Human Rights Groups regularly meet in places like United Nations, the European Union, African Union, Human Rights Council, and the World Health Organization. Especially under Western pressure they are working hard to make abortion a "human right" worldwide. As these organizations gain power and influence, they place pressure on developing nations, in particular, to advocate for agreed-upon policies. For example, the World Health Organization is a group that warrants special scrutiny. This organization is growing in power, and if it gains additional control, they could make it difficult for the US and other nations to make their own laws on such issues as abortion. When that happens, it would not matter what the Supreme Court or what congress would say about it. And that is what must be avoided at all costs. The World Health Organization should never be allowed to control the laws of individual nations.

That is why a Biblical voice must be heard when policy issues are discussed at these international levels. The work that Christian Council International and others do is to participate in policy development, document reviews, and oral discussion in the United Nations, WHO and other

places. In this work, they try to promote Family, Life, and Religious Freedoms. This is important because often policies are promoted that are destructive to these blessings. Please try to remember and support the work of those who try to bring a Biblical influence in these meetings. The work is difficult, and often hard to quantify. But with the Lord's blessing, it can be fruitful. May the Lord remember our leaders and grant them a desire to lead according to the morals and principles of His Holy Word. Then we with our children may lead a quiet and peaceable life in a culture where He may be honored and glorified.

John Van Der Brink is director of the Netherlands Reformed Christian School in Pompton Plains, New Jersey, and a member of the Board of Directors of CCI



[HenkJanvanSchothorst](#)

[@tccouncilorg](#)

ROE OVERTURNED: The US Supreme Court just overruled Roe v. Wade in its entirety, finding there is no right to abortion in the Constitution.

ROE TERUGGEDRAAID: Het VS Hooggerechtshof heeft zojuist Roe v. Wade in zijn geheel verworpen: er staat geen recht op abortus in de grondwet.



International struggle over unborn life: where woke wrecks, pro-life awakens

By: Meskerem Ritmeester and Henk Jan van Schothorst

That every child formed in the mother's womb has the right to live sounds like a logical standpoint from a Biblical point of view. But in today's society this point of view is under fire in the Netherlands and internationally. Especially

Western countries, driven by woke elites, want the woman's right to life and her choice to be of decisive importance here. Supporters of the 'pro-life' ideology (mostly conservatives and Christians) and supporters of the 'pro-abortion' ideology (mostly left-wing progressives) are diametrically opposed to each other.

As Christian Council International (CCI), formerly called Transatlantic Christian Council, we try to make the Dutch public and beyond aware of the international threat to Christian values in the areas of Life, Family, and Freedom of Religion and Education. You may think: "But I live in the Netherlands, why is it important for me to know what is happening internationally?" Because in today's globalizing world everything is connected. Therefore, international developments and policies have a direct and often negative impact on the right and freedom to design your family life based on biblical moral values.

These international developments are heavily influenced by international institutions such as the United Nations (UN) and the European Union (EU). For years they have been injecting billions into spreading their progressive ideology that not only promotes abortion, but also LGBT+, and free sexual rights as a human right and in the name of individual freedom. In this article, two concrete examples in our field of work show how this progressive ideology is rolled out: 1) progressive imagery fed by the "woke" movement, and 2) the unsolicited enshrinement of abortion rights, among others, in international treaties with non-Western countries.

The "woke" movement as a dominant imaging factor within our Western society

The "woke" movement has rapidly developed itself from a critical voice against exploitation in society to an extreme form of political correctness of progressive politicians, academics and media actors. Within the prevailing idea of the Western "woke" movement, anyone with conservative and/or Christian values is a threat to their progressive agenda. Even in the

Netherlands, anyone who publicly stands for pro-life issues can expect to be harshly attacked by the "woke" activists. For example, CCI was recently accused [in the NRC](#) newspaper by the pro-abortion movement "Baas in Eigen Buik (*literally translated: Boss in Own Stomach*)" of running a hate campaign because we stand up for the rights of the unborn child. These kinds of attacks make any kind of discussion on pro-life issues impossible, while the progressive "woke" movement has a free pass and can often use lots of money to push their progressive ideology deep inside the blood veins of Western society. The media (which especially values progressive perspectives on abortion rights, among other things), public education (steeped in progressive ideology), and health care (which promotes abortion as a quick and easy procedure) are the most obvious channels used to slowly change the perception of our children and teenagers.

Progressive ideology enshrined in international trade agreements with non-Western countries

But with the spreading of a progressive image within the Western world, the progressive wind of the "woke" movement does not stop. In our work as lobbyist and observer at the UN and EU institutions, we see more and more international trade agreements errupting between, for example, the EU and non-Western countries whereby issues such as abortion, sexual orientation and gender identity are added as human rights without the often much more conservative and religious non-Western countries asking for it or being aware of it. Beyond that, one has to wonder if these kinds of medical-ethical issues belong in trade treaties that should be purely about trade and development cooperation. Our organization tries to protect the sovereignty of non-Western countries and to make them aware and supportive of not accepting these kinds of Western-imposed medical-ethical topics; especially if it is not in line with their national legislation. Unfortunately, these trade agreements are accompanied by large flows of money from the EU and every time

it appears to be a serious challenge, especially for developing countries in e.g. Africa or South America, to stand strong against the coercive nature of the EU.

The above examples show that protecting Christian values internationally is more needed than ever. Fortunately, in our work we may experience God's guidance and support and also be hopeful by the sometimes small but important victories. A great example is that the U.S. Senate was able to stop the introduction of the Federal Pro-Abortion law in America. We also hope that the Supreme Court will end the nationwide right to abortion in the US. This has given the pro-life movement in both the US and the EU a boost to reopen the public discussion and continue the fight for the rights of the unborn child. In our work, we also try to make an important contribution to these discussions by identifying threats around international regulations on Life, Family, and Freedom and protecting our Christian values.

Meskerem Ritmeester, Policy & Advocacy Director Africa and Henk Jan van Schothorst, Executive Director Christian Council International

NEW 20 Year BINDING ACP EU Partnership Agreement includes deceptive provisions



The new, 20 Year BINDING ACP EU Partnership Agreement is highly promising regarding aid and trade, but....

includes deceptive provisions bringing in LGBTI issues, abortion, CSE and other violations to national sovereignty that need revision!

Henk Jan van Schothorst talks more about this in the video below.



[Click here for the PowerPoint presentation](#)

Abortion is not a human right

We felt compelled to respond to a number of falsehoods and allegations in the unfortunately framed contribution to the address of (Transatlantic) Christian Council International CCI (formerly TCC) by Annemieke van Straalen (NRC, May 14 & 15) 'Abortion also under fire in the Netherlands'.

[Read more](#)

ABORTUS

Geen mensenrecht

In de brief *Abortus ook onder vuur in Nederland* (14/5) staat dat de (Transatlantic) Christian Council International CCI (voorheen TCC) „het mensenrecht op abortus” meedogenloos afwijst. Maar in geen enkel internationaal verdrag of VN-document is abortus als mensenrecht opgenomen. Daarentegen staat het recht op leven wel genoemd in de Universele Verklaring van de Rechten van de Mens uit 1948. Ook staat daarin het gezin genoemd als fundamentele eenheid van de samenleving. Aan deze verdragsbepalingen zouden wij niet willen tornen. Wij zien de ‘pro-choice’-beweging met neokoloniaal aandoende ijver en enorme „strijdbaarheid” op de „barricades” om

het internationale recht precies op deze punten fundamenteel te wijzigen. De beschuldigingen dat CCI naar (bezoekers van) abortusklinieken „haatcampagnes” aansticht, „vermogend” is en „de spreekbuis van de Amerikaanse anti-abortusbeweging” zou zijn, verbaast ons. Met geen woord rept de auteur over de nood van vaak kwetsbare vrouwen en het kind dat ze dragen. CCI wordt als ngo louter en op bescheiden wijze gesteund door (Nederlandse!) particulieren en is dus geen VS-spreekbuis. Pro-abortusorganisaties daarentegen ontvangen bakken met overheidssubsidie of geld van internationale organisaties, waaronder de EU en de VN, voor hun activiteiten. Wat ons betreft stopt de overheid daar meteen mee, zodat er een gelijk speelveld ontstaat.

Henk Jan van Schothorst en **Jan Schippers** RvB en voorzitter RvT van de Stichting CCI

Let's introduce

Mark Den Hollander



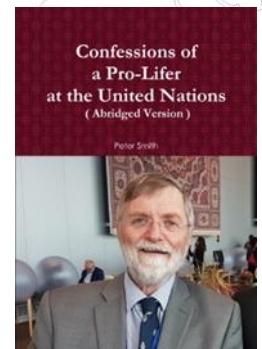
Mark den Hollander is a North American (US/CAN) representative for Christian Council International (CCI). He currently resides in New Jersey, being relatively close to the United Nations Headquarters in New York and the US Congress in Washington DC. Part of his assignment involves reaching out to politicians and public policymakers within the US Congress and its Member States to join hands with like-minded CSOs and religious organizations to advocate for Life, Family and Freedom. An important part of this work also involves developing a support base in the US and Canada and to build up the American part of the business network. <https://www.christiancouncilinternational.org/business-network>.

As a future educator, he also has an interest in literary classics and seeks to use traditional viewpoints that are founded on fundamental principles of law and philosophy to guide an analytical and critical approach to modern education. In addition, he understands the interconnectedness of education and politics and sees that the greatest impact will be had on our upcoming generation when combining the two, to both affect culture and promote meaningful change.

News from UN New York

Commission on Population & Development 55th session (CPD55)

Peter Smith followed the Commission on Population & Development 55th session. "This is another dangerous and useless meeting at UN headquarters. It is based upon the false premise that for a country to develop economically you must have a small number of children. The UK , USA , the Netherlands all became developed countries with high population growth and no modern contraceptives".



Initially these meeting were held by the Population Division, who are just a group of demographers who produced reports on demography. Then in 1994 there was the International Conference on Population & Development (IPCD) in Cairo. This was when the United Nations Population Fund (UNFPA) got involved with their pro-abortion , anti-natalist , anti-family policies. They also pushed the line that development only comes with low fertility.

This meeting got so radical that they could not agree on a document for three years prior to 2020. Pro-lifers considered this a good thing, but UN officials were scandalized. This year and last year they got a document, unfortunately.

This year there were just two references to families and six references to sexual and reproductive health and reproductive rights. There were also eighteen references to gender. The good news is that there were no mentions of " women in all their diversity", a cunning way of saying transgender. There was no mention of sexual orientation & gender identity , nor LGBTQI etc etc. Also no mention of Comprehensive Sexuality Education (CSE), that is lessons in depravity.

There was a good paragraph on national sovereignty, see below :

OP2. *Reaffirms* the sovereign right of each country to implement the recommendations of the Programme of Action of the International Conference on Population and Development or other proposals in the present resolution, **consistent with national laws and development priorities, with full respect for the various religious and ethical values and cultural backgrounds of its people**, and in conformity with universally recognized international human rights.

[Read additional stories on the theme above, from a Christian perspective](#)

Peter Smith represents CCI at the UN in New York

News from Africa

By: Meskerem Ritmeester

In the second quarter of 2022, CCI has focused almost exclusively on raising awareness of certain provisions in the **20-year binding EU-ACP agreement**, also known as the post-Cotonou agreement. Fortunately, the signing ceremony was postponed indefinitely in April due to the many uncertainties surrounding the national sovereignty of the ACP countries; especially when it comes to sensitive ethical issues related to human rights, social and human development (e.g. in areas such as sexual and reproductive health and sexual orientation). CCI, together with its American partner organization Family Watch International (FWI), has set up several campaign groups to further influence the policy makers from the ACP countries to avoid signing this agreement as long as it contains these concerning provisions.

In addition, CCI in collaboration with Driestar Christian University (DCU) organized a webinar on 15 June about the possibility of introducing **alternative sexual education curricula, such as**



the DCU's 'Wonderfully Made' curriculum, in various African countries. The main reason for this is to provide an alternative to the progressive sex education curricula called 'Comprehensive Sexual Education (CSE)' which the United Nations (UN) and the European Union (EU) are currently promoting in Africa. In this webinar, Christian and conservative partner organizations from different parts of the world (e.g. France, The US, Uganda, Ethiopia, Burkina Faso, South Africa, Haiti, etc.) were able to provide their own expertise. This webinar is a first step towards establishing an influential network of like-minded organizations to jointly promote alternative sex education curricula that are both based on healthy (sexual) relationships with fellow human beings and adaptable to the context of the often deeply religious and conservative African countries.

Finally, CCI Africa closely watches the worrying developments around the **new pandemic treaty of the World Health Organization (WHO)**. This treaty was introduced in 2022 and is currently being formulated under the leadership of the WHO to prevent new health pandemics and ensure a global health approach. It is expected that this treaty will not be signed anytime soon, but the content is nevertheless disturbing. There is a fear that once the WHO declares a pandemic, all governments that sign this treaty will be forced to take even more drastic measures than we have seen in the past two years related to COVID-19. National sovereignty and the freedom to organize healthcare at national level is threatened in this way. In addition, there is a risk that this treaty will enable the WHO to force countries to introduce sensitive topics in health care; think of e.g. sexual health care and rights (SRHR) including abortion and sexual orientation.

In the second half of this year, CCI Africa will continue to focus on raising awareness on the above topics among policy makers and policy influencers in Africa.

Meskerem Ritmeester is Policy & Advocacy Director Africa



The work of CCI in a nutshell

Life

The source of human life and its dignity is the fact that God created us in His image created as man and woman.

This dignity respects the right of everyone to life and to be born and to, as much as possible, to live in freedom together with others.

What's at stake:

In a 20-year binding trade deal with 79 poor countries, the EU is cunningly threatening to introduce abortion laws and sex education. The EU is not at all authorized in the field of education and health care, thus undermining their (and our) sovereignty.

What we do:

Together with key figures from these poor countries and the EU, we will ensure that this is known and countered and freedom to legislate is preserved.

Family

The traditional family is the cornerstone of society.

It is a natural unity that arises from a marriage of love and fidelity between a man and a woman. From this, boys and girls can be born who grow up in security and safety to adulthood under parental guidance.

What's at stake:

With EU and US in the lead attempts are made to impose the controversial term "sexual orientation and gender identity" as a new universal non-discrimination category through UN. Gender is a feeling, not biology but self-chosen identity. Gender ideology turns creation, nature and biology upside down.

What we do:

Through participation, we expose this overbearing ideology at the UN and lobby for global respect for Biblical standards for marriage and family.

Freedom

Freedom and human dignity are bonded together, but affected by sin.

The protection of freedom of religion and education is non-negotiable. The powers of states are therefore limited. They are accountable to their citizens.

What's at stake:

Finnish Christian politician Päivi Räsänen is on trial for incitement to hatred because of her expressed views on homosexuality and marriage of one man and one woman. Räsänen, on the other hand, defends freedom of religion and expression and bears witness to the gospel of reconciliation through Jesus Christ.

What we do:

We support this courageous woman with prayer, personal encouragement and our presence in the courtroom in Helsinki and as co-commentators in the media.

Media

Uitgelicht! April 1, 2022 Henk Jan van Schothorst and Kees v.d. Staaij about the case Päivi Räsänen

March 30 the Finnish politician Päivi Räsänen has been acquitted of the discrimination and insult of homosexuals. Van Schothorst about this in Uitgelicht!



English subtitles available. Turn subtitles on (or off) by clicking the button at the bottom of the video.

[Click here for a transcript of the video](#)

CCI present at a conference of [Ordo Iuris](#) in Brussels - April 20, 2022

At the conference in the European Parliament "Regulation of the EU: concern for democracy or an assault on sovereignty? "



Visit to [Drents Museum](#) for the opening of the Ararat Exhibition – May 10, 2022



Business Breakfast Armenian Embassy – May 11, 2022

Together with businessmen Sloof and Jelle van Veen invited to Business Breakfast with Prime Minister [Nikol Pashinyan / Նիկոլ Փաշինյան](#) and 4 Ministers and Tigran Balayan of [#Armenie](#) at [#VNONCW](#), followed by inauguration gift Armenia at the [#Peace Palace](#), received by Piet Hein Donner: a [#khachkar](#): a Cross stone.



Business trip to Armenia – May 17-21, 2022

As part of its support for the endangered Christian country of Armenia, CCI organized a business trip in cooperation with the Armenian government.



[See more photos of the Armenia events on our website.](#)

Transatlantic Summit IV of the Political Network for Values – May 27, 2022

Attending the Transatlantic Summit IV of the Political Network for Values in [#BudapestValues2022](#), defending and promoting Life, Family and Freedom and building and strengthening a pro-freedom agenda globally. Because: Freedom is at stake.



CCI business network meeting on Urk - June 8, 2022 - with Pete Hoekstra

Canal cruise in US style

Pete Hoekstra, former ambassador of the United States to the Netherlands, visited Urk. After a tour of the Neerlandia fishing company, Hoekstra boarded De Zuiderzee for a cruise on the IJsselmeer. On board were entrepreneurs, politicians and other interested parties. Hoekstra

and Henk Jan van Schothorst, director of the Christian Council International Foundation, spoke about current themes in the USA.

Message from "Het Urkerland" and photos by Riekelt Pasterkamp



Report on June events in the US

By: Mark den Hollander

The month of June has been eventful for the work of CCI as we were able to hold two events in the time that Henk Jan van Schothorst visited the United States. Both meetings turned out to be a great success as they brought awareness to the changing political environment we see evolving around us. The issues that many individuals are facing in the secular workplace can be viewed as an agenda being pushed on employees to conform and accept non-traditional values.

The first meeting was held on June 17 at the Smoke Rise Inn in Kinnelon, New Jersey. A board of panelists, including Mr. Len Deo, Mrs. Aida Wahba, and Mr. David Berkenbush addressed specific questions provided by Mr. Riekelt Pasterkamp on the topic, “Business Relations in a Secular and Increasingly Sexualized world – from a Christian Perspective.” The panelists shared some of their personal experiences about how they have been dealing with numerous issues in their current workplace environment. Each panelist had a chance to respond to the questions that were asked. While many concerns were shared, there was a positive takeaway that many of the issues that are faced can be tackled from a legislative perspective to ensure that individual rights to freedom of speech and opinion are not lost.

Our second meeting, on June 20 at Falk Panel in Grand Rapids, Michigan, was titled “War on Talent.” Mr. Pete Hoekstra, the former ambassador to the Netherlands, joined us for the evening as our keynote speaker and spoke about some of his experiences as being a conservative in the current political environment. One very interesting comment that he made was about how Europe and America are trying to get rid of Christianity and faith. He noted that the struggles we are facing as a society are a result of getting rid of Christianity because there is nothing else

that can replace the traditional values that maintain society. Following the presentation, Mr. Henk Jan van Schothorst presented the work of CCI and how the political atmosphere is changing the business environment with one major issue being gender ideologies. The Q&A that followed the two presentations, led by Mr. Riekelt Pasterkamp, allowed the audience to ask questions and share personal concerns about how these issues are directly impacting individual lives on a daily basis.

These meetings have shown that the issues we face as a society are becoming an increasing reality. Large corporations, small businesses, and employees are being forced to conform to values that go against their personal beliefs. Many of the individuals that attended these meetings shared personal stories about how the current workplace environment is causing them to feel uneasy about conforming to secular values. From the LGBT movement to gender ideologies, increasing pressure is placed on Christians to give up their personal beliefs for the sake of unity.

[Fotoverslag van het event in New Jersey](#)

[Fotoverslag van het event in Michigan](#)

Mark den Hollander is CCI Representative in the US



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**CCI**
Christian Council
International

Support us

CCI is a non-profit organisation. It develops an international network of Christians involved in public policy and influences policy from a Christian perspective. CCI speaks at international organisations such as the UN, EU and OSCE to stand up for a Christian voice with an extra focus on themes such as life, family and freedom.

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